II. *Tribe, Groups and Clans.*

101/618 It is necessary first of all to define clearly the precise meaning of these three terms.

We reserve the term *tribe* for the totality of the Thonga nation. This word is frequently used to designate the smaller national units, which are called after some old chief whose descendants are still reigning, like Tembe, Khosa, Nkuna, etc. We prefer for the sake of clearness to call these small units *clans*, as there is certainly a great resemblance between them and the Scottish clans. As a rule all men belonging to a clan bear the name of the old chief, who is more or less considered the ancestor of them all. In the Tembe country, most of the inhabitants will salute each other with these words: "Shawan Tembe, good morning, Tembe"! But Tembe, the name of the clan, means not only a group of people, but a certain part of the country south of Delagoa Bay. In that country men of other clans have settled. There are also sub-clans of the Tembe clan which have already adopted special salutations, because they have formed collateral branches of the big Tembe family. However the term *clan* is the best, I think, to designate this kind of national unit, as its origin is essentially familial. Now some of these clans, those which occupy the same tract of country, form *groups* because they speak the same dialect of the Thonga language.

III. *The generic Name of the Tribe.*

101/619 As we shall see, there is no true national unity amongst the Thongas (1). They are hardly conscious that they form a definite

193 (1) What orthography are we to adopt when using the Bantu proper names in the plural? Different systems are used in ethnographic books, but the following appears to me the most rational. When a Bantu proper name is used with its plural prefix, the addition of a final *s* is not justified; but in that case the prefix ought to be separated from the rest by a hyphen, in order that the uninitiated reader may understand at once that he is dealing with a plural. Thus I would write: Ama-Zulu, Ba-Ronga, etc.

584 you are there, or on the road, have nothing to do with it. The
825 zebra is *mbalamberi*, an animal of two colours; moreover it has no
777 horns. The same holds good for the giraffe. It has two colours,
784 it has too long bowels. Psa yila! The reedbuck cries: "Dzoo." It is a witch: a mukoñwana must not eat it. For the same reason a sheep without horns is never given to bakoñwana.

7. When you go with women to the parents of your fiancée for a *shirwulo*, viz., to bring them beer, should one of the jugs fall to the ground, psa yila! Return home!

606 8. From a Thonga of the Maputju country I once heard that it
609 was a great taboo in that district for a man to drink milk with
784 his parents-in-law; let us say rather to *eat* milk, as Natives
618 always take it in its solid form, i. e. curdled. This man was a
825 Christian; he had given up many heathen customs and had gone
177 so far as to partake of milk with his mother-in-law, but, the people all round were very much shocked at his conduct. Pushing my inquiry further, I heard that the milk taboo was observed not only with bakoñwana, but with all the inhabitants of the country who did not belong to one's clan; curdled milk was to be eaten only with people bearing the same family name. In other words, it is forbidden to eat milk *in any village where one can take a wife*. In a very interesting paper published in the *South African Journal of Science*, 1925, p. 481, Mrs A. W. Hoernlé says that this custom is wide-spread amongst many Bantu tribes of Central and South Africa, and explains it by the very intimate relationship which is thought to exist between human beings and cattle. The oxen are one with the clan to which they belong, and only members of that clan can partake of the milk of their cows. I never met with this idea in the other parts of the Thonga tribe, and I may remark that, as the Maputju clan is settled very near to the Zulus and has been more or less "zuluised", this custom might very well have been borrowed from its neighbours. Further researches will show whether the other Thonga clans have preserved what seems to be a very old Bantu idea, or at any rate traces of it. This is quite possible.

584 9. Do not build a hut for your wife before you have married
777 her. Mankhelu says: "Even if you have plenty of money
784 to lobola, if you make such a blunder your wife will be taken from you.

588 607 called *the cat*, because it is like a cat which is put on their shoulders and scratches them. It scratches away the bukonwana which prevented their marriage. (Viguet.) In this case it is the *shikonwana* which is killed. So the taboo is removed and they can marry.

III. *Marriages permitted.*

582 609 618 Relatives from the eighth degree of relationship can marry unconditionally (Mankhelu). The choice of a boy is unlimited within the clan and even within the tribe. However, marriages into a *too far distant clan* are not recommended, according to Viguet, for the following reasons: 1) If the marriage were unsuccessful, the parents-in-law against whom the claim would be brought might run away with wife and oxen, and we should lose our herd. 2) If our oxen multiplied in the other clan, we might be tempted to go and make war on our parents-in-law in order to appropriate the cattle. So blood would be shed on account of our own oxen! This would bring shame upon us! Whilst if we marry amongst friends, even amongst remote relatives, should a quarrel occur, we shall try to settle it peacefully. These people are amongst those with whom we discuss in the hut. With strangers we discuss outside, on the square, and we occasionally fight with them and drive them away. So a difficulty can better be dealt with when our bukonwana are people living close by.

IV. *Marriages recommended.*

582 607 Here we must take into account two different cases: some marriages are contracted on account of a kind of right of pre-emption, others on account of a right of inheritance.

1) Right of pre-emption.

There are amongst the relatives of a man certain women on whom he has a kind of preferential claim, or a right of pre-emption,

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583 177 the new conditions, especially when a stay of a year or two in Johannesburg was long enough to save the necessary sum. Boys who had no sister, and who would have been destitute in former times, could then dream of a *tshenwge* viz., of marrying three or four wives! And they had this advantage that, their wives not having been bought with family property (their sister's oxen), no bakoñwana could disturb them in their domestic happiness, as may happen to those who marry by means of the first-mentioned lobolo.

This leads us to consider :

583 ## II. *The original meaning and the consequences of the lobola.*

As we have said previously, the only way of understanding the lobola, as well as other similar payments in kind which we meet with amongst a great number of uncivilized or half civilized nations, (1) is to consider it as *a compensation given by one group to another group*, in order to restore the equilibrium between the various collective units composing the clan. The first group acquires a new member : the second feels itself diminished, and claims something which permits it to reconstitute itself, in its turn, by the acquisition of another woman. This collectivist conception alone explains all the facts.

583 562 593 618 In this way, the acquired wife, though she keeps her shibongo (clan name), becomes the property of the first group. She is aggregated to it by complicated marriage ceremonies, representing the passage from one family to another. She is owned by the new family, herself and the children who will be born of her. She is not in any way a slave, but she is nevertheless owned. She is not the individual property of one man, but the collective property of a group. Hence the following facts :

1) Her whole family take part in the marriage ceremonies, especially on the day when the lobola is brought by the bridegroom

(1) See A. van Gennep, *Les Rites de passage*, p. 170. The *Kalym* of the Turko-Mongolians, the *Nyen* of Southern Thibet, etc., correspond to the Bantu lobola.

583 (See page 109). Every male member of the group has his say in
835 the matter.
593 2) Brothers will always be ready to help a poor relative to
618 lobola : they work for their group.

3) The acquired wife is their presumptive spouse, though they cannot have sexual relations with her (matlulana). They will inherit her if the husband dies, according to the laws which I have explained in the preceding paragraphs.

583 4) Children will belong to the father, live with him, bear his
593 shibongo (family name), and owe him obedience : boys will
611 strengthen this group, girls will be lobota (factitive of lobola—
618 sold in marriage) for his profit. Father-right rests on the lobola. This is so plain that any child born of a woman who has not been paid for belongs to the mother's family, bears her shibongo name and will live in the malume's village. In Appendix VII, I relate the story of Spoon Libombo as an instance of this primordial law. This is the reason why, when the question is discussed, men insist so much on the preservation of the lobola. They say : "Who will guarantee us the possession of our children if lobola is suppressed ?"

So the lobola is by no means a purchase made by the husband, and still less a present given to the wife's parents.

1) Advantages of the lobola custom.

583 In the primitive collective stage of society the custom has
593 certainly *great advantages* : 1) It strengthens the family, I mean
586 the patriarchal family, the right of the father. 2) It marks the difference between a legitimate and an illegitimate marriage and, in this sense, takes the place of an official marriage register. 3) It puts hindrances in the way of dissolving the matrimonial union, as a wife cannot definitely leave her husband without her group returning the lobola. Therefore it obliges the married pair to have a certain regard one for the other.

However, these advantages must not be exaggerated. Marriages

182 621 783 829 mourning over the dead. The inner connexion existing between these three events is that, in all of them, there is a passage. Hence the resemblance of the rites. This striking similarity is, to my mind, the best proof that the passage rites constitute a peculiar category. When a headman has decided to move, he leaves his old kraal, he *separates* from it, not by the ordinary gate, but by a special opening made at the back of the village. He is not allowed to return to it again. Then, for him and for all his people, begins a *marginal period* of one month or móre, the buhlapfa (notice the prefix *bu* which indicates a period here, as in busahana [page 42]). We see the village, during these few weeks, put beyond the pale of society. The ordinary laws are suspended, (licencious songs), and many special taboos are enforced (prohibition of sexual relations, fire taboo, water taboo, etc.), just as in the period of mourning; at last the village returns to the ordinary course of life by a final act of purification, the mysterious *hlamba ndjaka*, which seems to be the most powerful means of cleansing the collective life. This last ceremony shows that, here, the marginal period has been instituted on account of the uncleaness, the impurity of the old village. Let us remember that in most cases the village has been moved on account of death! All the adult members of the social organism take part in the cleansing (at least in the Northern clans) and so the village begins a new and purified life. No one can deny the deep significance of all these rites and the mystic conception of the Thonga village.

C. THE HEADMAN AND THE ORGANISATION OF THE VILLAGE.

596 576 621 618 Each village thus possesses its superior (hosi), its master. He is called *munumzane* or *numzane*, a curious expression which is also employed in Zulu ; it means owner of a kraal, gentleman, and is often used in saluting grown up men. We have seen the mystic relation between the headman and his *muti*. The village, the muti, is the primitive social organism. The clan (tiko), which is the gathering of all the *miti*, reproduces all the features of the village life on a large scale. So the *numzane* corresponds to the *hosi*, chief of the tribe. Both certainly possess great authority,

622 596

622 but it must not become tyrannical. They must govern for the
546 benefit of their subordinates.
264 This peculiar position of the numzane amongst his people is
554 illustrated, in a striking way, by the laws of distribution of the joints of meat on the day when the headman kills an ox to feast them. The various portions must be distributed to the relatives according to the place which they occupy in the family. The headman, nominal proprietor of the ox, will keep the breast (shifuba). This is not only the sternum and the ribs, but most of the viscera which are contained in them. The tripe, the heart, the kidneys will be put all together inside the stomach, and constitute what is called *nkopfu wa homu*. The headman will probably send the heart and the kidneys to his wives (tinkosikazi, his queens!). The brother who comes next will receive one of the hindlegs ; the third in rank one of the forelegs. The elder son will eat the second hindleg, and the younger son the second foreleg. They will eat this meat with their families, or houses (tiyindlu). This custom is very old (1).

Let us continue with the distribution. To the brothers-in-law, or to the relatives-in-law generally, the tail is sent. It is the portion of the sister. But it does not consist only of the tail properly so-called ; it comprises all the hind parts of the animal, especially the rump (kondjo). The malume (maternal uncle) receives part of the loins (muhlubula). The liver is put aside for the grandfather and the old people generally, because it is soft and they have no teeth to gnaw the bones. The head belongs to all the men of the village, who must eat it on the hubo, as we have seen. They may give the tongue (ndjaka) to the old men. It

622 (1) This custom is illustrated in a very interesting manner by the relative position
596 of the three clans occupying the South of the Bay. They are all descended from
264 Tembe (See page 23). *Tembe*, the ancestor, representing the elder branch of the royal family, ate the chest. He was the superior (hosi), and this rank is still held by
554 his descendants in the direct line. *Sabi* or Mpanyele, the second brother, or son of the second brother, ate the hindleg ; he was established later on in the Mathuthweni
618 district, between Tembe and Maputju. *Maputju*, the younger brother, head of the third branch, ate the foreleg. But he revolted against his elder brother and carved out for himself a kingdom which very soon became stronger than those of Tembe and Mathuthweni. Mathuthweni became more or less independent. But when people wish to remind the Maputju people of their inferior origin, they say to them : "Tembe ate the breast, Sabi the hindleg and Maputju the foreleg!"

574/609 travellers be refused the customary hospitality in a village and incur misfortune later on, the chief will make the people of that village responsible and they will have to pay a fine. In Gungunyana's country, warriors were sent to plunder such a village. Lack of hospitality, however, is not considered as a taboo (yila), because "it does not kill;" it is a bad action (biha).

Now-a-days, customs are beginning to change: hundreds of young men (magaisa) coming from the towns after working there, pass through the country, and it would be impossible to put them up and feed them all. They sleep on the *bandla* and cook food for themselves, occasionally buying some mealies or a hen from the inhabitants. Moreover they have plenty of money and they can pay!

609/618/761 It must also be added that, if they dispense hospitality liberally, the Thongas can be very hard on people who do not belong to their special clan. Feelings of humanity are sometimes strangely deficient. I heard of a boy of the Manyisa district who had fallen down near the lake of Rikatla, unable to proceed further on account of a bad wound received while working on the railway at Lourenço Marques. Nobody took pity on him because he was of another clan, and he would have died there if a Christian woman, named Lois, had not received him in her village and nursed him. Fear of death and its contamination may partly explain this want of compassion for strangers.

784/643/677 As already mentioned, it was formerly taboo to enter the village square wearing boots. These boots consist of sandals made by the hunters for their long trips through the thorny bush. They were not allowed on the hubo. A subject was not permitted to sit on a mortar or on anything else; the chief alone could do so, and it was considered a sign of pride to sit on anything but the bare ground!

609/177/574 The habit of offering a concubine to passers-by is never met with amongst the Rongas as it is in other tribes. Now-a-days dissolute women may offer themselves. But they have learnt from white men this new kind of immorality.

On the fate of the Thonga Village, see Practical Conclusions. V.

356

THIRD PART

NATIONAL LIFE.

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618 Having sketched the Individual and Communal life of the
619 Thongas, we will now consider the National life. We have seen
186 what the *muti*, the Village, means to a Thonga. What does the Nation, *tiko* mean to him ? As we have already pointed out, what we call the nation, tiko, is not the big tribe, numbering many hundred thousand people, but the special clan to which this Thonga belongs. There is no feeling of national unity in the tribe as a whole ; its unity consists only in a language and in certain customs which are common to all the clans. So the true national unit is the clan.

CHAPTER I

THE CLAN.

A. THE ACTUAL ORGANISATION OF THE CLAN.

618 Whatever may have been the social system of the Bantus in past ages, the existing clan can be directly traced from the patriarchal family. I have particularly studied the composition of two of the Thonga clans, the Nkunas of Zoutpansberg and the Mazwayas of the estuary of the Nkomati. Let us see how the clan is composed in both these instances.

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The *Nkuna clan*, which migrated from the confluence of the Oliphant and the Limpopo to the country round Leydsdorp, in or about 1835, is certainly of purer descent than most of the other Thonga clans, owing to its disturbed history, and its numerous migrations, which prevented other people from joining it, and strengthened the national tie. The common ancestor is Nkuna who, some centuries ago, left Zululand to settle in the plain of the Lower Limpopo. His son was Shitlhelana, his grandson Rinono. All the sons of Rinono are still known. One of them was the founder of the present royal family, and the present *hosi*, or chief, Muhlaba, is descended from him. The descendants of the others, who call themselves by their names, are the Mhuntanyanas, the Mashonganas, the Mbhalatis, the Kulalas, the Mushwanas, etc ; they form what is called the *doors* (tinyangwa) of the clan, each of these districts being under a petty chief, who is *hosana* (diminutive of hosi). So the nation is but an enlarged family, and everyone depends on his *hosana* and his *hosi*, the members of the royal family alone having only a *hosi*.

In the *Nondwane country*, on either side of the estuary of the Nkomati river, the situation is somewhat different. The whole land was first occupied in the XIIth and XIIIth centuries by three independant clans, the Mahlangwan, Hoñwana and Nkumba, which were on a lower scale of civilisation, having no iron weapons nor oxhide shields. They were scattered as far as the Mabota country and their numbers must have been very small. The first invasion took place before 1500, when a chief of the Lebombo hills, called Libombo, settled almost without fighting on the Western part of the estuary. This is the chief whom the old Portuguese chronicler Perestrello met in 1554, and who said to him : "Mena Libombo," — "I am Libombo." The original clans submitted to the invaders who mixed with them, being of a race not very different from them. Then, later on, came the clan now reigning, the Mazwaya, which conquered the whole country. According to the custom generally observed, the Mazwaya chief placed his relatives and his sons in the various parts of the land as petty chiefs (tihosana), retaining the old Libombo chiefs as counsellors (tindjuna) to watch over them and assist them.

~~618~~ 173 This is a wise method of procedure ; the old deposed chief becomes responsible for the welfare of the new one! Thus many *doors*, or provinces, were formed, and each of the petty chiefs founded a house and had his *shibongo*, his laudatory name. There were the Mazwayas Masinga, the main branch, near Morakwen ; the Mazwayas Tjakame, not far from them ; the Mazwayas Hlewane, Mazwayas Matinana, Mazwayas Makaneta, etc. As the complicated law of succession frequently leads to disorders, as we shall see, the main branch lost its paramount power and became secondary. The kingship passed to the Matinana branch. However the Masingas retained their authority in their own jurisdiction, and it would be taboo to place a member of a younger branch over them. The religious regard for hierarchical order prevents such an offence from being committed. Lately, as a consequence of the war of 1904, the Hlewane branch has in its turn supplanted the Matinana. Thus, from all these facts, it appears that two hundred years ago the population of Nondwane was already composed of three different and successive strata. Since then, the situation has become even more complex. A great number of immigrants has settled in the country during the last century, coming in groups and asking the Mazwaya chiefs and headmen to receive them. This is a very frequent occurrence amongst Thongas. They leave their clan, either because they want change, or because an accusation of witchcraft has induced them to flee, and they settle in another country. When I was living in Rikatla, one of the outside districts of the Mazwaya country, before the war of 1894, the hosana was Muzila, a young man of the reigning family ; but there were very few Mazwayas under him. He had as induna a Tembe man, called Mandjia, whose father, Mankhere, had come long ago to Rikatla and was so well known that people used to call the district : "Ka Mankhere," "at Mankhere's." Another village belonged to Hamunde, a Djonga from the Shiburi country. A third had been built by people from the Manyisa clan, Nwamangele being their headman. So the population of the estuary of the Nkomati, which, at that time, had reached the number of six to eight thousand, became very mixed. However the country continued to be called

618 "At Mazwaya's." It belongs to the Mazwaya clan. Such is the
173 composition of most of the Thonga clans. Though their origin is
643 certainly the patriarchal family, they are far from being of pure descent.

I am under the impression that this is the old, normal political state of the Bantus; small tribes of some thousand persons with a tendency to break up when they become too numerous, as happened in the cases of the Tembe-Mapute and also with the Mpfumo-Matjolo, who were first united under Nhlaruti. (See p. 23.) During the first half of the XIXth century, South Africa witnessed the birth of many great Native kingdoms, in which a large number of tribes were amalgamated, thus forming much larger political units. This process began in the country now called Zululand, in 1800. There were then ninety-four different small tribes comparable with our Thonga clans, that of the Zulus numbering only 2000. They were amalgamated from 1818 to 1820, by the well-known military raids of Chaka, to such an extent that, in 1820, this terrible despot had more than 100,000 warriors, and had added half a million people to his tribe, having deprived three hundred clans of their independance. Two Zulu generals followed the exemple of Chaka; Moselekatsi amalgamated the tribes of Mashonaland, and Manukosi the Thonga clans, not to mention Songandaba and the Angoni of Nyassa. The same process was accomplished more or less peacefully for the Bantus of Basutoland by Moshesh, and for the Ba-Pedi by Sekukuni, so that the original state of autonomy of the South African clans was generally replaced by large kingdoms in the greater part of South Africa.

Was this development a natural evolution of the Bantu clan? I do not think so. We must not forget that the first idea of transforming the clan into a conquering army, the idea which inspired Chaka, was brought to Zululand by the Umtetwa chief Dingiswayo, and that he conceived it on seeing an English regiment in Cape Town. The military spirit of the Bantus, which might have remained quiescent for a few more centuries, was awakened or stirred up by this sight. The seed found a wonderfully well-prepared soil, I confess. But without that seed, this terrible

618 movement of amalgamation would probably not have taken place,
175 and I think we may consider the clan life, as it is still met with
643 amongst the Rongas, (who were never subject to the Ngoni chief), as the typical Bantu political state (1).

B. THE LAUDATORY NAME OF THE CLANS AND TOTEMISM.

618 Each clan is known by the name of the old chief who is believed
551 to have been its original ancestor. So the Nkuna clan comes
101 from Nkuna, who lived four or five hundred years ago, and left Zululand for the Bilen country. The Mazwaya clan descends from Mazwaya, grandfather of Masinga and ancestor of all the heads of the sub-clans, Makaneta, Hlewane, etc. This name is a kind of *family name* for all the members of the clan. In the course of time, when sub-clans begin to aspire to independence, the first ancestor tends to fall into oblivion and is supplanted by the ancestor of the sub-clan. This process is easily noticeable at the present moment in Nondwane, where Mboza, for instance, calls himself a Makaneta. He says: "I am wa ka Makaneta," — "a man of the Makaneta house;" but if he wants to be more precise, he will say: "I am a Mazwaya Makaneta." — "Shibongo a shi diwi," "the family name is never eaten, it is eternal!" (Mboza.)

618 This old name is called *shibongo* from *ku bonga*, to laud, to
551 praise. It is a *laudatory name*. It is used as such on two diffe-
576 rent occasions: 1) *When people salute each other*. A friend who meets Mboza on the road will say to him: "Shawan, Makaneta," "Good morning Makaneta!" But also: "Shawan Makhetshe!" (Makhetshe is the grandfather of Makaneta); or: "Shawan Mazwaya" or "Shawan Nwamasuluke." (Masuluke is the true father of Mboza.)

(1) The objection might be raised that, in former centuries, the celebrated Monomotapa founded a great kingdom. But what this exactly was, nobody knows. The descriptions of the chroniclers of those times are not very trustworthy, as we shall see from a quotation which will be made later on.

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854 551 618 2) *To soothe babies.* Should Mboza's son cry, his nurse will say : "Miyela, Makaneta ñwa yindlu ya ntima," "Keep quiet Makaneta, of the black hut." It may also happen that some one wishing to console himself in affliction will do the same. Notice these last words : "of the black hut." They mean : "You who belong to a village where the huts have had time to become black ; they have never been destroyed by enemies, as no enemy dares to attack your clan! So the roofs have blackened inside from the effects of the smoke and outside from those of the rain!" It is customary to add to the name of the ancestor words such as these, in order to flatter more highly the man you salute, or the baby you console.

551 618 576 Thus each clan has a *laudatory phrase* which is sometimes much longer than the Makaneta one. Masinga is called "wa le hondjo-sin," "the one who reigns over the red earth," (more fertile than the sand). The Matinanas or Ngomanes are lauded thus : "Nkandjetele wa ku woma, ku baleka minambyana" — "the one who tramples on a dry place, and rivers begin to flow," because he is so heavy, so powerful! (Compare p. 87.) A Ngomane man will address his paternal aunt with the same words, when offering her a present.

Here are some of the best known shibongo. Their meaning is sometimes unknown, as they often contain ancient and obsolete expressions :

Hoñwana : Ñwahomu ya ntima ñwa mu-Nondjwana, — The black ox of Nondjwana (or Nondwane).

Shirindja : Mudzunga ntima wa le dzungen, — Black South of the South ?

Mpfumo : Ba hlela misaba ba khabuta, — They winnow the sand ; they eat it. (The sand is so white in their country that it resembles mealies flour : they never lack food.)

Libombo : Libombo la Ndlopfu, — Elephant's face.

Nkuna : Ba homu! Ba nyari! ya makhwiri, Ñwashitjimba buraka, ba mahlwen ka ntima. — Those of the ox! Those of the buffalo, the buffalo with the large belly which rolls in the mud, the one with a black spot on the forehead!

Rikotjo : Ba Nyamasi, — Those of the nyamari tree.

Khosa : Ba ripanga ro sheka ba ntsindja, — Those of the keen

551 edged sword which "cuts" disputes brought to the capital. (The
618 Khosa chiefs were reputed for their wisdom in deciding judicial
576 or political matters.)

Hlabi: Ba Nhlabi ba ku bengwa, Nhlabi ya Makamu ya Mavuse ya nkoñwana, — The Hlabi who are hated, sons of Makamu, of Mavuse, of the calf (?)

Hlengwe: Shikobela sha Matsheme, Tshauke wa Matsheme (names of old chiefs).

551 *Tembe*: Mulao Ngolanyama madlaya a nga di, makhama a
618 nga di, a dlayele bahloti: — Mulao (son of Tembe ?), the lion
643 which kills and does not eat, the hawk which kills, it kills for
576 the hunters, viz., it is so well fed itself, so rich that it can leave the meat for others. Such a sentence was pronounced in former times by subjects entering the royal kraal, crawling on their knees, when they wished to receive food from the chief.

Nhlanganu: Ba ku hlomula fumo, ba renga ndlela: — Those who unsheath the sword in order to buy the road, (the right of passing through a foreign country) (1).

551 In addition to these laudatory phrases of clans, each individual has his own sentence or sentences by which he praises himself or by which others praise his qualities. They are specially common in the case of boys, but even girls possess them. In the case of chiefs, such praises are much longer. See for instance the praise of the Nkuna chief Muhlaba (Part III, Ch. III, III).

* * *

171 If we cross the plain of the Sabi and reach the Drakensberg, we find that all the Pedi tribes dwelling together with the Thongas in the Leydenburg and Zoutpansberg district, possess laudatory

551 (1) This custom of praising the various tribes in such terms is so familiar to the
609 Thongas that they have invented similar expressions for the white people. The Portuguese are: Ba ka nâofazmalo, — the Sons of Never mind, because they seem to the Natives to be somewhat careless or indifferent. The English are: Bana ba Nhluleki, a hluleka ku hleka, a tiba ku lwa, — the sons of the one who cannot, he cannot laugh, he knows how to fight! Perhaps Natives consider them, on the contrary, somewhat too earnest, too keen!

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171 names which they also call *seboko*, the same word as shibongo ; but most of these names are names of animals, and are called by the technical term *muthupu*, totem ; the animal is the emblem or totem of the group. The Pedi clans are totemic. This means that, not only do they glorify themselves by comparing themselves with an animal and taking its name, but they think that there is a mysterious vital connection between it and their social group. I cannot give here all the facts I collected amongst them on the subject. They were published in *Le Globe*, the organ of the Geneva Geographical Society, Volume LXIII, under the following title : *Le Totemisme chez les Thongas, les Pédis et les Vendas*. Let me merely mention the following details. The Khahas of the Shiluvane valley have the small grey antelope, called duyker, as totem. They salute each other in these words : "Goni! Phudi!" *Goni* is probably the name of an old ancestor, the same as Nkuna for the Ba-Nkuna ; but *phudi* means duyker. They consider it taboo to make a *ntehe* of its skin for their children. Some of them do not eat the flesh of that antelope, fearing that their children would become idiotic, or be covered with boils. They will not sit near a man of another clan who is handling the skin of a duyker. The Mashilas (Sekukuni's people), who have the porcupine as totem, say : "It is taboo even to tread on its dung ; the soles of the feet would become sore." Many clans are afraid to kill the animal which is their totem ; this is not a law enforced by the chiefs ; the totem itself punishes them if they trangress it. However, nowhere did I find the idea that they are descended from the totem. They say : "The old people noticed that the flesh of such and such an animal made the people of their clan ill ; so they proclaimed it taboo." Amongst the Vendas, or at any rate amongst certain Venda clans (Ba-Laudzi, Ba-Ngwe, Ba-Shidzibe) the totem is connected with the ancestor-gods. At his death, each member of the clan is transformed into the animal venerated by his clan and joins his congeners in the sacred wood where they live.

618 Nothing of this kind is met with amongst the Thongas. The 351 Thonga clans are *atotemic*. Many men bear the name of animals, [825] but this is merely a means of glorifying themselves ; there is no taboo with regard to the flesh, skin, or dung of that animal. I have

551 come to this conclusion after a careful investigation. Here are
618 the only facts that I have discovered which may be said to
522 be connected with totemic customs.

The first is that the shibongo sometimes gives an opportunity for *more or less witty jokes*. There is, near Rikatla, a clan called *Shibindji*. Shibindji means liver. When a man of this group meets with others who eat liver, they say to him : "Come along, we are going to run this skewer through you and roast you!" Another clan is the *Ntcheko*; this word means a tumbler or a small calabash with an elongated handle used for drinking purposes (p. 50). At the bukanye time, when everyone is getting these calabashes ready for the feast, they say : "Alas! poor creatures that we are! People are going to carry us from one end of the country to the other, to dip us into their pots and drink out of us!.." And so on. This is not totemism. I have however met with four more facts which must be mentioned, and which are very interesting.

618 1) In the neighbourhood of Pietersburg a Thonga who belongs
551 to the Rikotcho clan, but whose shibongo is *Ñwangwenya*, the son
177 of the crocodile, is said to "dance the crocodile" (tshina ngwenya). These Thonga words are the expression used by the Pedis to indicate their totemic customs, (ho bina kwena), not that there is any special dance or song performed in honour of the sacred animal ; this may have been the case formerly, but is not so now.

2) The laudatory name of the Nkuna clan is also said to be a *ntshupu*, though it does not imply any taboo. This word, which is unknown in other parts of Thongaland, corresponds to the Pedi *muthupu*, which indicates totemic animals. The Nkuna men like to be saluted by these words : "Nkuna! Homu (ox)! Nyari
618 (buffalo)!" There are a number of Pedi tribes who "dance to the
551 buffalo." Mankhelu assured me that, as the Nkunas have the
177 same totem as these tribes, they have a common origin, and have come from the same place in Zululand. This assertion is so evidently erroneous that he could not maintain it. The old man had not the slightest idea of historical accuracy: he had only unconsciously drawn the conclusion of a common origin from a similarity of totem. Moreover, in his set of divinatory bones, he used to represent his own tribe by a small piece of ox bone, just in

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618 the same way as Pedi diviners do for their various tribes, represent-
551 ing them by the astragalus of their totems.

177 As regards these two incidents, they are easily explained by the influence of the Sutho tribes amongst which these Thongas have been living for a long time. Nothing of the kind is met with amongst the Thongas who have remained in their own country, and Maaghe, the Pedi-Khaha chief, assured me that this appellation of the Nkunas, Nyari, buffalo, is modern and borrowed from the Pedis. The Nkunas do not observe any taboo in connexion with the ox, and this shows that their totemic custom is a mere external imitation of that of the Suthos. These two instances might be called cases of *secondary* or *adopted totemism*.

618 Considering only the Thongas as compared with the Pedis, we
551 might be tempted to conclude that the Thongas had preserved
178 the old Bantu custom of naming themselves after their ancestor; just as the Thongas used to add to that name other laudatory expressions, we might suppose that the Pedi tribes had adopted names of animals to glorify themselves; in the course of time, the essentially totemic fears and taboos may have been introduced into the customs, owing to the importance given to the shibongo. This would be a rationalistic explanation of totemism. *A priori* it could not be said to be impossible. Though totemism appears to be a very old custom of humanity, it is not necessary, *per se*, that the Bantu tribes should have all passed through that phase of primitive belief.

618 3) I must, however, mention a third instance which shows
539 that this notion of a community of life between an animal and
178 a human group must have existed also amongst the ancient Thongas. There are, *in their folklore*, tales which seem to have been inspired by such old ideas now lost, especially the tale of Titishan, which I have published in "Les chants et contes des Ba-Ronga," page 253. A girl named Titishan marries a man. When she goes to her husband's home, she asks her parents to give her their cat. They refuse, saying: "You know that our life is attached to it." She insists, and they at last consent. She shuts the animal up in a place where nobody sees it. Her husband even ignores its existence. One day,

618 339 178 when she goes to the fields, the cat escapes from its kraal, enters the hut, puts on the war ornaments of the husband, dances and sings. Children, attracted by the noise, discover it and inform the master of the village of the strange dancer they have seen... He goes and kills it. At that very moment Titishan falls to the ground, in her garden. She says : "I have been killed at home." She asks her husband to accompany her, with the corpse of the cat wrapped in a mat, to her parents' village. All her relatives attend. They severely reproach their daughter for having insisted on taking the animal. The mat is unrolled and, as soon as they see the dead cat, they all fall lifeless to the ground, one after the other. The Clan-of-the-Cat is destroyed and the husband returns home after having closed the gate of the village with a branch (See Page 323) : "Their life was in the cat."

Folk-tales are very ancient, and this one is by no means unique of its kind. (Compare Jacottet's "Treasury of the Ba-Sutho Lore," Morija 1908, Masilo punished for having eaten zebra's meat.) It shows that the totemic idea existed in former times, in those primitive periods of evolution which some Bantu tribes have now outgrown.

618 178 825 4) A fourth fact tends to show that a mystic relation between an animal and a clan existed in former times. There is, in the north of the Transvaal, a kind of antelope called by the Natives *Shidyanaman*. It is taboo to kill it : "If a Nkuna does so, his family will die during the year, his wife, his children, his own head. Should he kill one by mistake, he must cry with a loud voice and shout : — Yoo! Shana n'ta da na mane! Alack! with whom shall I eat it ?" Mankhelu says it is taboo to eat its flesh, but the taboo is removed by this formula. The Ba-Nkuna do not know how to explain this custom. It may be a relic of former totemic ideas. However Mankhelu does not call the shidyanaman a ntshupu, a totem, and these customs may perhaps be connected with the *nuru* superstition (Comp. Ch. IV and Part IV, hunting customs). But even supposing that the Thongas have gone through the totemic phase, the present clans have entirely forgotten these ancient beliefs.

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L31 My aim in the following chapter is to describe the typical Bantu clan, that small community of some hundreds or thousands of souls, with its hereditary chief, and not the larger tribe, formed by the amalgamation of many clans by a military despot (Chaka), or a cunning diplomat (Moshesh). Some of us have seen the court of Gungunyana at Mandlakazi, before this last South African military Empire was destroyed by the Portuguese in 1895 and 1896. Dr. Liengme, one of my colleagues, has described some of the striking customs of this court in the Report of the S. A. A. A. S. of 1904 and in the *Bulletin de la Société Neuchâteloise de Géographie*, of 1901. I refer the reader to these publications and shall be satisfied with the more modest, but not less interesting life, of the old Thonga clan.

In this small community the *Chief* forms the centre of national life. It is in him that the clan becomes conscious of its unity. Without him it loses its bearings ; it has lost its head. The republican conception is as far removed as possible from the ideas and instincts of these people! So it will be necessary to study first the customs relating to the chief. Then we shall see the part played by the *Counsellors*, a second institution which strengthens and limits the first. The political system of these tiny kingdoms having been sketched, we shall consider the *Court* and the *Army*, these being the two domains in which national life chiefly manifests itself.

644 When they have chosen it—it must be the stem of a nkonono
789 tree—they cut it and bring it back to the capital. In front walks the master of the ceremonies, Godlela, and behind him four men carrying the shiphandje. Those who accompany them have the right of entering the villages and stealing fowls. Woe to those who meet with this troop! They will be relieved of all they carry, "because the forked branch of the great medicine of the chief is taboo."

644 The sacred branch having duly reached the capital, Godlela
789 proceeds to the second operation, the *burning of the drugs*.
826 Mboza saw the magician take pieces of skin cut from buffaloes,
237 lions, hyenas, elans, panthers, snakes of various kinds and, last but not least, from the bodies of men, enemies killed in the wars: part of the skin of the forehead, the heart, the diaphragm, the nails, a finger, some ears... All these are roasted
644 in a large pot. On some mats are spread various magical roots
789 cut into small pieces; these are also thrown into the pot. The chief and all the sub-chiefs approach and, with hollow reeds, inhale and swallow the vapour and the smoke which emanates from it (1).

The preparation of the great medicine having been sucessfully accomplished, the great drum (nhumburi) of the capital is brought on to the square, and everybody dances, even women, who take assagais in their hands and sing: "We are thankful if we die (hi tlangela ku fa)" viz., "The country is in security, our invincible medicine is ready! We shall not be killed by enemies
644 but will die a natural death." Before extinguishing the fire which
789 was used to roast the medicines, Godlela takes a little water,
782 pours it on the glowing embers and, when it vaporises with the customary sound, he emits the sacramental *tsu* and prays to his gods, the departed spirits of the Tlhaltha family, as doctors always do, in order to obtain their blessing on the nyokwekulu.

618 (1) The Hlewane sub-clan, which revolted many times against the legal chief and succeeded by its intrigues in provoking the war of 1894, after which it became the reigning family of Nondwane, used to abstain from participating in this "swallowing of the smoke," because, in former years, it had been defeated by Maphunga's people and some of its men killed; their flesh had been used in the concoction of the nyokwekulu. So they feared to go and inhale the odour of their fellow clansmen.

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551 of the white man. M. Torre do Valle has given a list of nicknames
609 of the merchants and other inhabitants of Lourenço Marques in his Diccionario Shironga-Portuguez. It is well worth consulting, and the only thing wanting is a photograph of the white man and an explanation of the name ; it would be a splendid illustration of Native wit!

551 So far we have spoken only of *personal* names and nicknames. But,
576 beside these, every man possesses his clan name, or surname, viz., the
618 name of the first of his known ancestors. Grown up men prefer being addressed by this name, which is *shibongo*, viz. the name by which they are "glorified." This subject is treated in Part III (p. 360).

APPENDIX III (See p. 98)

Unnatural Vice in the Johannesburg Compounds.

838 In January 1915 one of my colleagues passing near one of the
648 Johannesburg Compounds, saw a big company of Natives singing and
588 walking in the direction of another Compound where a great dance was taking place. Amongst them there were a number of women. My colleague asked his Native evangelist how it was possible that so many women should be walking about in that part of the world, where the feminine element is very small. The man told him : "They are not women! They are *tinkhontshana*, boys who have placed on their chests the breasts of women carved in wood, and who are going to the dance in order to play the part of women. To-night when they return to their dormitories, their 'husbands' will have to give them 10/, and only on that condition will the tinkhontshana remove their breasts and comply with the desire of their husbands." I sent for this evangelist who knew everything about the inner life of the Compounds and asked him about it ; this is the information I received :

Unnatural vice (bukhontshana) has become a regular institution in the Compounds. The word *nkhontshana* seems to come from the Ngoni, a Zulu dialect spoken in the Limpopo plain. The nkhontshana is the boy used by another man to satisfy his lust, and the man is called his *nima*, husband. When a gang of new workers arrives in a Compound, the Native induna, who has the supervision of the Compound, and the Native policemen, who have their rooms at the

4/23 622 already been tilled and abandoned as exhausted. I noticed this at Rikatla. Muzila favoured his pagan subjects, who joined him in his drinking bouts, and invited him to orgies in their villages, at the expense of the Christians who no longer brew the byala beer. Thus interest at Court works here as elsewhere, although it be based on nothing nobler than pots of beer!

4/23 578 692 The difficulties of this system also become apparent in the more thickly populated parts of the country, where all the land has been assigned and taken up. The women look round for fresh arable land and may, wittingly or unwittingly, encroach on the ground of another numzane. There is, indeed, a neutral zone, vaguely defined, of which no one has as yet taken possession, as it has not been needed : the wild fruits growing there are common property ; any one who likes can gather them. When the population increases, the inhabitants of the more congested districts go and appropriate this land without any kind of formality. Such was the case when the people of Libombo, dwelling on the edge of the palm-marsh, (to the East of Rikatla), sent their women to the hill-side to clear a piece of land which Muzila considered to be his property. This petty chief sent remonstrances to Nkolele, his colleague, headman of the village of Libombo ; but they were not heeded. Then the men of Rikatla hid themselves in the bushes surrounding the spot in question, and, when the women commenced to hoe the ground, rushed out upon them, seized their hoes, and drove them off. This was the "fait patent," the actionable proceeding, which was necessary in order to have the matter brought before the Chief's tribunal. This incident doubtless led the parties interested to define their respective boundaries more carefully.

4/23 618 To go and till another's land would be quite impossible, even taboo, between people of different clans. In the present case, the Rikatla and Libombo men belonged to the same Nondwane country. There was a good understanding between them. The Rikatla men would not have dared to plough a field without permission on Mabota's ground, the boundary of which was on the other side of the big water-tree (muhlu).

As regards *boundary marks* between the different clans, they

consist of natural objects such as rivers, big trees, etc. To define the boundaries of their gardens, Natives dig an ordinary ditch (ndjilekana, mu-mi) round the field, of about one foot in depth, which can be plainly traced even after the lapse of several years, when the field may have become fallow land and overgrown with vegetation. 423 618

The question of *roads* is a somewhat difficult, and often thorny one to settle. Where has one the right to go ? And if, after having used a certain path for years, you suddenly find it blocked by some individual whose field it skirts, and who has taken a fancy to hoe it up, what is to be done ? To try to come to some friendly agreement is always the most practical course. How often have we not experienced this difficulty with our cart ! The agriculturists were the more annoyed because we required a road three or four yards wide, while the Native footpaths are only little tracks of 15 to 20 inches in width. Being the only "carriage folk" in the district, we often had to ask permission to be allowed to pass, and have rarely met with any kind of refusal, for the Black is a reasonable being and quite appreciates the fact that roads are a necessity. If they see that a road is "ripening" (wupfile), viz., that it is more and more frequently used, they bow before the facts ; here, as everywhere else, custom makes the law. 423 487

At the present moment matters have been made much more simple as the Portuguese Government has constructed wide highways in all the more frequented parts of the country. 177 491

B. PRODUCTS OF THE SOIL.

I. *Cereals.*

"Hosi ya psone i *psithjama*" — "Their king is the *maize*," says Mboza. This cereal is indeed the most widely cultivated in Thongaland. It is called *psifake* in Djonga. In the more fertile regions of the North, the size of the cobs and of the grains (nhleke, yin-tin) is much larger than on the sandy dunes of the Ba-Ronga. So the people of Khosen make fun of the Ba-Ronga and compare 243

When the hunter has chosen, amongst all the prints, those which seem to him the freshest, he follows them up with his dogs, and there is some chance of his being able to overtake the antelope. Should he succeed in killing the animal without having received help from others he can appropriate it without rewarding anybody. Only if it is too heavy to carry home, he will shout loudly, on a high, piercing note : "Hoooooyiooo..." perhaps after having climbed up a tree so as to make himself heard a long way off. Or he will cut off the tail, cover the beast with branches to prevent vultures from damaging it, plant his assegay in the ground to show his right to the possession of his victim and go home to fetch his companions. When they have helped him to carry the animal, he will give each of them a good piece of meat. 224 476

But if the hunter who discovered the antelope sees that he will not be able to come up with it, he will blow his trumpet (lihlanga) to call for help. When the men arrive on the spot, he will cry : "Nkuna yowee!.." if he is a Nkuna, and all will repeat after him : "Nkuna yowee!.." to acknowledge his right. He may abandon the pursuit, but his right has been proclaimed and will be remembered. The second hunter who stabs the antelope will do the same ; he will shout "Mabota yowee!.." if he is of the Mabota clan, and so on till the animal has been killed. Then the meat will be distributed amongst the killers in the following way. The first will receive the body, the second one leg, the third the foreleg and the fourth the throat, a portion being reserved for the chief, the owner of the soil on which the antelope has fallen. This manner of pursuing an animal, in which helpers are summoned by means of the trumpet, is called ku nyikanana, i. e. to surrender to each other. 202 224 476

If the hunter has killed a very big animal and wants his clansmen alone to help him, he has recourse to another method of calling them. Each clan possesses its own rallying cry, and this he shouts loudly. This is intended to exclude men of other clans and to prevent fighting or any dispute about the possession of the animal. For the Ba-Nkuna this cry is : *Nyandlaleyo*! For the Tsungus : *Hi nhlanga*! For the Manukosi clan : *Muyamba ngwenya ya nambu wa tingwenya*! (Crocodile of the river of 224 202 618

202 618 crocodiles.) For the Mavundjas: *Kahlamba ntjhaba yo nonoha!* (The big mountain, difficult to climb.) (1)

224 643 825 845 I have already described the part of a slain animal which is to be given to the chief, when speaking of the prerogatives of the master of the country (I. p. 406). Here are some supplementary details: The general idea is that he must receive that part of the body which was in contact with the soil, because the chief is the owner of the soil. In the case of smaller antelopes however he does not claim anything. For the eland he requires, in addition to the ordinary tribute, half of the *bofu* i. e. of the paunch of fat which is found round the heart of this animal and which is believed to possess precious medicinal properties (especially for new-born children born with a membrane round the head). As regards buffaloes and other big animals, should they be killed far away from home, their meat is cut into strips (mishakatsu) and two bundles are brought back to the chief; it is also the rule that the head of any beast of great size should be eaten on the bandla, the meeting-place of the men in the capital.

224 643

Buffalo hunter with his victim.

224 824 So far I have described hunting with assegais, sticks and dogs. But Thongas possess another method of killing big animals, a method which is perhaps more ancient and which has sometimes proved very useful. This is the *marindji trap*, i. e. a large pit dug in the earth, covered with branches and full of pointed stakes upon which the animal falls and impales itself. These stakes are made

(1) The Pedis have the same custom. The Ba-Khaha cry: "Harutsha! Mugoni! We"! This expression comes from the verb *rutsha*, to cross a river on a tree trunk, as the Khaha clan is said to have been held back in its ancient migrations by a swollen river and to have *rutsha* it successfully. The remembrance of this feat of their ancestors has remained and has given rise to this rallying cry. Other Pedis say: *'Sivantja khomo,"* viz., "the killer will be given an ox for his reward."